The Long Game

Cricket's Story in Modern Irish History

A Documentary Film examining cricket's evolution from a symbol of British colonial power to its contemporary role in Irish society

By

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A dissertation by practice submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for MA in Journalism & Digital Communications

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Declaration:

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Digital Communications, is all only my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not used any form of 'artificial intelligence' or related software, nor copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

Signed: Saad Ahmed

Dated: 06th August 2025

Acknowledgements

A big thank you to the participants of this documentary, Professor Paul Rouse, John Mullins and Benjamin White. All three of you had amazing on-screen presence and energy. Thank you for sharing your wonderful knowledge with me and with the audiences of this film. I have learned a great deal from you. You three are the pillars on which this film stands.

The next words of gratitude are for my supervisor Conor Tiernan, who made me believe that my topic was worth researching and guided me in the direction of Phoenix Cricket Club. Without you, this documentary would not have been possible.

Thank you to my mom who encouraged me from day one of my master's degree and showed faith in me when I did not think myself capable of creating a documentary from scratch. Your continuous belief in me is what keeps me going.

Also, a great deal of thanks to my best friends Haya Habib and Arsalan Shoaib who encouraged me throughout my dissertation and help keep my sanity intact. Thank you for listening to me rant and complain and for keeping up with my progress. As the great poet Charles Lamb once said "Tis the privilege of friendship to talk nonsense, and to have her nonsense respected."

A final thankyou to all the staff and players at Phoenix Cricket Club who took out the time to meet me and talk to me. Your kindness is what keeps the world go round!

Abstract

This dissertation by practice explores how cricket, once seen as a symbol of British colonial influence, has evolved into a sport that is gradually being reinterpreted and reintegrated into Irish cultural life. Through the production of a video documentary titled *The Long Game*, this project examines the historical marginalisation of cricket in Ireland, its fluctuating national perception, and its recent revival, particularly in light of immigration, institutional support, and the Irish national team's growing success. The narrative is grounded in the lived history of Phoenix Cricket Club, Ireland's oldest cricket institution, and links expert commentary with present-day reflections from key figures within Irish history and cricket.

The research combines secondary historical scholarship with primary interviews, including contributions from historian Professor Paul Rouse, Phoenix Cricket Club former president John Mullins, and current international cricketer Ben White. The film captures the cultural tensions, shifting identities, and grassroots efforts that continue to redefine cricket's place in Irish society.

In addition to detailing the film's development, this dissertation report critically reflects on the production process, ethical considerations, and practical limitations encountered during filming and post-production. It also discusses how the original idea transformed during research, resulting in a more focused and intimate exploration of Irish cricket through the lens of one iconic club. Ultimately, the project demonstrates how sports can serve as both a mirror of national history and a bridge for contemporary multicultural identities.

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Chapter One: Introduction

I know one person who follows it [Cricket], he is a protestant, if that's an indication of anything.

- Found on the subreddit r/Ireland

1.1 Purpose of the Project

This dissertation by practice sets out to explore the historical, cultural, and social journey of cricket in Ireland, both North and South, from its colonial foundations to its modern-day realities through the lens of Phoenix Cricket Club, one of the oldest continuously playing cricket clubs in the country, providing a unique window into the sport's contested place in Irish life. The project, presented in the form of a video documentary titled *The Long Game – Cricket, Identity and The Irish Story*, examines how cricket, a sport so intimately tied to British imperial identity has survived and evolved (sometimes even celebrated) in a country that once sought to reject many of its colonial inheritances in pursuit of national self-definition.

Rather than taking a general overview of the cricketing environment, the documentary grounds its narrative in the lived experience of a single institution, Phoenix Cricket Club in Dublin's Phoenix Park. Founded in the 1830s and historically tied to British administrators and elites, Phoenix serves as the perfect representation of the wider story of Irish cricket. Through interviews, archival material, and visual storytelling, the documentary examines how a once-exclusive and colonial club has evolved into a diverse, community-led space reflective of Ireland's social transformation.

Though globally celebrated in several post-colonial nations, such as India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the West Indies, Cricket has occupied a controversial space in Ireland's national sporting consciousness. Its association with Protestant Unionist communities, the British military, and colonial authority led to its decline in popularity during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, especially due to the favouring of more indigenous sports during the Gaelic Revival and the rise of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA). Despite

this historical distancing, cricket never completely disappeared from the Irish sporting landscape. Rather, it has existed in parallel, quietly held up by groups of players and clubs and has slowly been gaining ground, particularly since the turn of the 21st century and Ireland's elevation first to a One Day playing nation and then to Test status along with Afghanistan in 2017.

The purpose of this project, therefore, can be divided into two parts. First, to examine and document the evolution of cricket in Ireland, its introduction under British rule, its decline amid nationalist sentiment, and its recent quiet revival. And second, to interrogate how sport, in this case, cricket, intersects with post-colonial identity, cultural memory, and changing conceptions of “Irishness”.

Essentially, the project is not only an academic exploration but also a journalistic and personally creative response to this underexplored topic. As a migrant from Pakistan, a post-colonial nation where cricket is deeply woven into national identity, I have long been intrigued by the different cultural meanings assigned to the sport in different post-colonial societies. I aim to open public discourse on the nature of national identity in contemporary Ireland and the extent to which post-colonial legacies continue to shape everyday life, even through something as seemingly apolitical as sport. I am particularly interested in how Ireland’s complex colonial past has shaped its sporting landscape, and how modern migration and multiculturalism are reshaping it again.

1.2 Why This Topic Matters

I think the significance of this project lies in its ability to bring together themes of history and identity, especially in the context of the modern immigration debates, through a subject that is both ordinary and politically charged. In post-colonial discourse, sports often emerge as a key topic of interest where the coloniser and the colonised collide. Cricket, in particular, has been well-documented as a sport of empire, an instrument of British soft power and a tool for promoting colonial discipline and etiquette, long referred to as the gentlemen’s sport. Yet in many former colonies, including Pakistan, India or

some Caribbean nations, cricket was appropriated and repurposed as a platform for resistance, national pride, and international visibility.

Ireland presents a unique case study in this landscape. As both a settler colony and a partially partitioned state with a long-standing internal division between Catholic Nationalism and Protestant Unionism, cricket's story here cannot be told as one of straightforward rejection or complete acceptance. Phoenix Cricket Club, the country's oldest, is not just a sports institution. It is a historical witness. From its colonial foundations to its modern multicultural reinvention, the club reflects Ireland's evolving relationship with itself and with its past.

While other former British colonies have integrated cricket into national culture, Ireland has largely looked down upon it as something foreign, elite, and historically problematic. However, over the last two decades, cricket has enjoyed something of a quiet revival especially among immigrant communities from South Asia, the Caribbean, and Africa, who bring their own cricketing cultures to Irish soil. The game's increasing visibility in Irish schools, its integration into youth programmes, and the growing achievements of the national team all point to an evolving relationship that warrants attention.

Furthermore, this topic has become increasingly relevant in light of Ireland's growing multiculturalism. Today, Phoenix's players include Irish-born youth, migrants from cricketing nations, and second-generation immigrants, all participating in reshaping what cricket means in 21st-century Ireland. Their stories complicate the old binaries of native versus foreign, colonised versus coloniser, and invite a more nuanced view of Irish identity.

In a society where demographics are changing rapidly, and where conversations about integration, belonging, and identity are at an all time high, the question arises: Can cricket be reimagined as a part of Irish identity, not in spite of its colonial past, but because it offers a way to embrace different-ness? This project, then, does not just ask where cricket fits into Irish history, it asks what cricket's story tells us about the Ireland of today.

1.3 Chosen Format: Documentary Film

This dissertation takes the form of a Documentary Film accompanied by this written report. The documentary is the core creative artefact through which the research findings, arguments, and insights are communicated, while this report provides the critical, theoretical, and methodological framework for understanding the production. The choice of a documentary format was made due to cricket being a major spectator sport watched by millions globally on their televisions so I felt that a visual film would be best medium to cover a topic around it. As a journalism student, I have taken courses to learn how to use visual media to tell complex stories that resonate with diverse audiences. Documentary film as a form, enables not only the communication of factual content but also the layering of emotion, memory, and place in ways that the written word alone often cannot achieve. By visually capturing locations like Phoenix Park Cricket Club, the oldest cricket club in Ireland, or documenting live matches, the viewer is offered an immersive experience that brings the past into conversation with the present.

Documentary also offers a democratic platform to feature multiple voices, players, historians and club officials, each adding their own perspectives on cricket's evolving meaning in Ireland. This multiplicity is essential to the theme of the project: there is no singular Irish experience of cricket, just as there is no single Irish identity. The form allows the research to breathe, to unfold through lived experience rather than only through academic citation. Moreover, the documentary format allows the use of archival footage, still photography, and on-location visuals to create a rich, multi-sensory text. It gives the me the ability to construct a compelling narrative arc: one that is accessible to the general public while remaining grounded in academic inquiry.

This written report aims to provide essential context and critical insight into the video documentary. In this report, the reader will find a detailed account of my research journey, the historical and theoretical frameworks that informed my approach, and the creative and editorial decisions made during the production. This includes my choice of interview subjects, filming locations, use of archival material, and the narrative structure of the film. My goal is for this report to serve as a companion to the documentary, offering the reader

an in-depth understanding of how and why the project was developed, as well as the methodological and ethical considerations involved. Together, the documentary and this written report aim to form a coherent and unified body of work that demonstrates my practical and theoretical understanding of journalism, documentary storytelling, and critical cultural analysis.

Chapter Two: Evidence of Research

The development of *The Long Game* was grounded in a multifaced research process combining academic literature, expert insight, and historical and contemporary analysis. This phase of the project helped me structure the documentary and outline its central themes; cricket's colonial legacy, its fluctuating place in Irish identity, and its re-emergence in a multicultural Ireland. Research was conducted through a combination of academic reading, historical investigation, expert consultation, and engaging with numerous video productions.

2.1 Literature Review

A foundational part of my research was the literature review completed for the dissertation proposal prior to the creation of this documentary. That review traced cricket's trajectory as a post-colonial sport and examined its cultural symbolism in Ireland compared to other former colonies.

Andreas-Johann Sorger's essay *Cricket and Colonialism: Towards a Political Theory of Sport* was instrumental in shaping the theoretical framework of the project. Sorger challenged the notion of sport as an apolitical space, arguing instead for an "externalist" approach that understands games like cricket as deeply embedded within the hierarchies and ideologies of empire (Sorger, 2023). He positioned cricket as a cultural instrument that extended the soft power of the British Empire, reinforcing notions of discipline, hierarchy, and civility. Yet, Sorger also acknowledged the sport's potential for subversion, referencing C.L.R. James' classic *Beyond a Boundary* to demonstrate how cricket was repurposed by colonized populations as a tool for resistance and identity-building (James, 1963). This duality, cricket as both imperial instrument and site of rebellion, was central to my exploration of its contested legacy in Ireland.

To grasp Ireland's colonial positioning, I relied heavily on Jane Ohlmeyer's *Ireland, India and the British Empire*. Though not focused exclusively on sport, Ohlmeyer's depiction of Ireland as a "laboratory" for British colonial practices highlighted how cultural tools such

as education, religion, and sport were deployed to shape behaviour and reinforce imperial ideology (Ohlmeyer, 2015). The inclusion of Ireland alongside other colonies allowed for a comparative lens and suggested that cricket's introduction to Ireland was part of a larger strategy of soft control. This work provided historical grounding for my investigation into cricket's role in constructing (and at times undermining) British authority in Ireland.

More locally focused, Jon Gemmell's *Naturally Played by Irishmen* offered a comprehensive historical lens. Gemmell traced cricket's arrival in Ireland with the British Army and its early popularity among Anglo-Irish elites. He explored the sport's decline following the rise of Irish nationalism and the GAA's promotion of indigenous sports like Gaelic football and hurling. Importantly, he framed cricket's marginalization not just as a political rejection of Britishness, but as part of a broader cultural realignment that privileged "authentic" Irish identity over "colonial" forms of recreation (Gemmell, 2009). His work informed my understanding of why cricket remained culturally marginal, even after independence, and raised questions about how it might be reinterpreted today.

I then moved on to situating Ireland's cricketing story in a broader context and consulted Kaufman and Patterson's work *Cross-National Cultural Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket*. Their analysis highlighted how cricket, originally imposed through colonialism, was absorbed and reconfigured in post-colonial societies (Kaufman and Patterson, 2005). They emphasized that cultural adoption was rarely one-directional; cricket was not simply accepted but also reshaped to reflect local identities and power structures. Their framework helped me think about how cricket's meaning in Ireland may differ from its original colonial associations and how its growing popularity in immigrant communities could be a form of cultural reclamation.

Similarly, Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson's *Globalization and Sport* examined the migration of sports symbols in an increasingly interconnected world. While their primary focus was on macro-level trends, their distinction between "glocalization" and "cultural homogenization" was particularly relevant. Cricket in Ireland, I realized, was not just an inherited British pastime but a global game being reintroduced through new populations, new identities, and new meanings (Giulianott and Robertson, 2007). These

ideas became essential when considering the role of the South Asian diaspora in revitalizing cricket's grassroots in Ireland.

I also turned to David Hassan and Philip O'Kane's research on sport in Northern Ireland. In *Terrorism and the Abnormality of Sport in Northern Ireland*, their research demonstrated how cricket had historically been identified with Protestant and Unionist communities, particularly in the North, and how this association limited its acceptance among Catholics and Nationalists (Hassan and O'Kane, 2012). Their findings underscored the ways in which sport in Northern Ireland often reflected and reinforced sectarian divides. While my documentary focuses on the Republic, these insights were important for understanding why cricket has remained a culturally loaded and sometimes dividing activity across the island.

I then consulted Bede Scott's work on sport and identity formation. His *Of Territorial Borders and Test Cricket* argued that cricket often acts as a metaphor for national cohesion and cultural boundaries (Scott, 2009). Though his focus was primarily on larger cricketing nations, his ideas helped frame my thinking around the symbolic weight cricket still carries, especially when it comes to defining who belongs within the cultural narrative of a nation. His writing was particularly useful in framing my interview questions around national identity and representation.

Simon Philpott's *The Politics of Purity* dealt with how media constructs narratives of corruption, tradition, and integrity in cricket (Philpott, 2018). While the piece focused on international contexts, the theoretical tools it provided were helpful for analysing how cricket is portrayed or more often, ignored in Irish media. I used his lens to critique the limited representation of cricket in mainstream Irish outlets and to explore how that silence itself shapes public perception of the sport. This became one of the central questions I asked all of my interviewees and the answers provided important insights that provided depth to the documentary.

Yet, despite this great body of literature, noticeable gaps remained, particularly around contemporary perceptions of cricket in Ireland and the sport's growing multicultural

presence. This documentary seeks to address these omissions by documenting present-day stories through voices anchored in the lived experience of Phoenix Cricket Club.

2.2 Primary Research

In addition to engaging with a wide body of academic literature, I undertook extensive primary research that played a huge role in both the narrative content and aesthetic direction of the documentary. The foremost step was the identification and consultation of credible experts who could bring authenticity and and historical perspective to the story I wanted to tell.

An essential discovery during this research phase was Professor Paul Rouse, a historian renowned for his work on Irish sport and society. As I searched for academic voices discussing the cultural history of cricket in Ireland, Rouse's name surfaced repeatedly in both scholarly and public-facing media. Having authored multiple books about sports in Ireland and having contributed to countless others, he felt like the perfect voice to go into the historical side of my documentary.

I had him locked as a potential interviewee when I encountered an episode of the *Off the Ball* podcast in which he discussed the complex legacy of cricket in Irish history. *Off the Ball*, one of Ireland's leading multi-platform sports media outlets, is known for its nuanced and well-researched sports journalism. In that episode, Rouse talked about the ways in which cricket served as both a sporting pastime and a cultural symbol, often viewed through the lens of colonial identity and national resistance. His framing of the sport as something that had to negotiate its place in Irish society during and after British rule resonated deeply with the central themes I was trying to capture in the film. Rouse's eventual on-camera participation enriched the documentary with critical insight, lending it both historical depth and expert opinion about the current cricketing environment.

Meanwhile, my research into Irish cricket's institutional legacy led me to Phoenix Cricket Club, one of the oldest and most prestigious clubs in the country. Founded in 1830 and still active in Dublin's Phoenix Park, the club offered a direct link to the long and complicated history of cricket in Ireland. I combed through the club's official website, using

it to build a timeline of key events, milestones, and transformations. I did the same thing with Cricket Leinster's website, going through the history and gallery pages especially. This gave me valuable historical context and a basis for identifying visual material for the film. Phoenix Cricket Club's continuity, surviving political upheavals, shifting national sentiments, and the rise of native Irish sports with the GAA, made it an ideal case study for exploring the endurance and reinvention of cricket on Irish soil.

While researching John Mullins, I stumbled upon a video interview he had done in 2023 for Phoenix Cricket Club, where he spoke in detail about the club's traditions, achievements, and evolution. I watched the video uploaded on Phoenix CC's Facebook account, familiarizing myself with the historical importance of the club. A week later, I met John at the cricket ground and he voluntarily gave me a personal tour of the club, walking me through the changing rooms, the main hall, and areas adorned with trophies, historical photographs, and memorabilia. He introduced me to players, coaches, and committee members, and spoke for over two hours about the club's nearly 200-year-old journey. The visit not only enriched my understanding but solidified Phoenix CC's importance in the story I was trying to tell.

During my conversation with John, I also discovered a rare book titled Cricket in Ireland, authored by William Patrick Hone, a former president of Phoenix Cricket Club, in 1955. While I was unable to access the full text due to its scarcity, its existence as a historical artefact signified that cricket once had a much more embedded literary and institutional presence than is commonly recognized. That such a work remains obscure highlighted a broader erasure or marginalization of cricket within Irish public memory, another key tension that the documentary sought to investigate.

2.3 Technical Research

A central component of the research for this documentary involved developing a clear and coherent artistic and narrative vision as a director and editor. From the outset, I was conscious that the story of Irish cricket could only be told purely through facts and expert opinions via interviews. It would need a visual rhythm and structure that communicated

identity, resilience, and historical relevance. Early in pre-production, I adopted a thematic focus on legacy and belonging, shaping my storyboard and interview strategy accordingly.

According to Bill Nichols, “the filmmaker gathers the necessary raw materials and then fashions a meditation, perspective, or proposal from them” (Nichols, 2017) Before filming, I compiled comprehensive interview briefs and equipment checklists, adhering to Nichols’ recommendation that preparation is fundamental to both creative control and ethical practice. Each interviewee was approached with pre-written questions tailored to their expertise, ensuring that responses would build naturally into the broader historical and cultural arc of the film. Rushes were stored and logged meticulously using Adobe Premiere Pro, with each sequence colour tagged by speaker, and theme. This system enabled me to track narrative threads and experiment with pacing during the assembly part of the edit.

The initial assembly edit served not just as a rough cut but as a conceptual rehearsal, echoing Rabiger’s claim that “the first assembly is an experiment in structure” (Rabiger, 2013). This version revealed areas where visuals lacked contrast or flow, prompting decisions to integrate black-and-white imagery and archival footage to convey both temporal shifts and geographic spread.

As the visual tone of the film began to take shape, I turned my focus to colour grading, an essential tool for shaping the emotional and aesthetic atmosphere of a documentary. I began by watching a range of contemporary documentary films, paying close attention to how colour palettes influenced tone and narrative. For instance, the muted, earthy tones in The Edge (2019) underscored the seriousness of its subject matter, while the vibrant, high-contrast grading in sports documentaries like Test (2020) gave a sense of dynamism and immediacy. I also explored colour grading tutorials and breakdowns by professional editors on YouTube, specifically focusing on workflows within Adobe Premiere Pro. This helped me better understand tools such as Lumetri Color, adjustment layers, and LUT applications. I experimented with contrast, temperature, and saturation to create visual distinction between archival footage and contemporary interviews. Ultimately, the colour

grade was crafted to match the documentary's tone, subtle yet cinematic, aiming to evoke both nostalgia and cultural relevance while maintaining a professional, polished aesthetic.

Chapter Three: Constructing the Product

3.1 Interviews

As soon as I watched the episode of *Off the Ball* podcast featuring Professor Paul Rouse, I was convinced he was the voice that needed to feature in my documentary. To reach out to the Professor, I looked up his contact details on the UCD Faculty page and emailed him, introducing myself and outlining the focus of my documentary.

In my message, I explained why his voice would be a valuable contribution, particularly given his expertise in Irish sporting and cultural history. To my relief, he responded positively and said he'd be happy to take part. To make it as convenient for him as possible, I asked him for a time slot, informing him that I would be happy to work around his schedule. I even asked him if he wanted me to come over to his office at the University, but he replied saying that he was okay with any location of my choosing. I suggested St. Stephen's Green Park as the interview location, aiming to create a distinctly Irish visual backdrop for the conversation. Given that much of his input would centre around Irish history, I felt the setting would naturally complement the tone and subject matter of his interview.

In the process of navigating Phoenix Cricket Club's official website, I came across contact details for three key figures within the club's administration: Jackie Cahill (Honorary Secretary), Aidan O'Byrne (Membership), and Alan Maginnis (President). I reached out to all three via email, explaining my project and asking who they believed would be the most suitable person to speak to about the club's history. It was Jackie Cahill, whom I found out now holds the title of the president of Phoenix Cricket Club, who kindly pointed me in the direction of John Mullins, a former president, describing him as someone with unmatched knowledge of Phoenix CC and its legacy.

I followed up with Jackie to request John's contact details, and she generously shared John's phone number with me. I called John, explained the nature of my project, and he warmly invited me to come by the club to watch a match the very next weekend between

Phoenix and Malahide. That afternoon was exceptional to say the least where he gave me a personal tour of the club. Before leaving, I scheduled a formal sit-down interview with John, knowing that his voice would be central to this documentary.

Building on the visual contrast I had already established with Professor Paul Rouse's interview in the open-air setting of St. Stephen's Green, I wanted John Mullins' segment to feel more grounded in the physical legacy of Phoenix Cricket Club itself. The club's trophy room stood out immediately as the ideal location. With walls adorned by historic team photographs, awards, and memorabilia, it provided a rich, authentic backdrop that visually echoed the stories I knew John would share. Since many of my questions for him centred on Phoenix's legacy and evolution, the space added both context and depth to his words. With John's permission, I rearranged some of the furniture to frame the shot effectively, settling on a position where soft natural light entered the room. This light provided a warm tone, enhancing the intimate feel of the interview while avoiding harsh shadows on his face, striking a balance between professional lighting and the documentary's organic style.

John then introduced me to Benjamin White, who happened to be playing for Phoenix that day. Ben is a leg-spin bowler who has represented Ireland at the international level, and his presence was a stroke of luck. I had been actively trying to reach current or former members of the Irish cricket team for weeks, sending messages through social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter, even LinkedIn at one point, but none had responded. Meeting Ben in person was an unexpected breakthrough. Since I had my camera, microphone, and tripod with me, I asked if he'd be open to doing a short interview right then and there, and to my surprise, he kindly agreed. I had already prepared a list of questions specifically for this kind of moment, so I was able to record a short but insightful interview on the spot. His perspective added a valuable, contemporary voice to the documentary, bridging the historical with the present.

For Ben's interview, time was of essence. It was the innings break of the match, and with just a few minutes before he had to return to the field, I had to move quickly. I scouted the area around the pavilion and found a relatively quiet spot away from the bustle of the

rest of the team. Conveniently, the Phoenix Cricket Club signboard stood in the background, an unplanned but fitting visual element that grounded the interview in its setting. I swiftly set up my camera and audio equipment, mindful not to delay him. Despite the rush, the backdrop added a subtle sense of place and identity, making the brief exchange all the more valuable for the documentary.

3.2 Design

The Long Game blends historical narrative and expert insight to construct an emotionally resonant portrait of Irish cricket. I decided to juxtapose intimate interviews with Paul Rouse and John Mullins against layered visual sequences drawn from archival footage and images. This interaction between past and present allows the story to unfold with depth and continuity, where viewers are able to visualise some of the history being talked about.

Each interview was composed with deliberate visual care. Rouse is positioned in a soft, green outdoor setting, offering a grounded, reflective mood. Mullins speaks from within Phoenix Cricket Club's trophy room, with walls lined with historical photographs and trophies that physically surround him with the past he describes. Ben White's interview, conducted quickly during an innings break, was shot near the Pavilion signage, his relaxed posture and candid delivery capturing the spontaneity of a current player caught mid-game. Across all these setups, the camera keeps a respectful distance, allowing for both intimacy and environmental context.

The B-roll footage that I chose threads the narrative together; close-up shots of aged photographs, slow pans across display cases, and sweeping visuals of the club's grounds with a match being played. These are in contrast to the actual match footage when an interviewee talks about a specific match, providing a rhythm that shifts between reflective and immediate. Archival images are mostly monochrome to evoke a sense of time passed, while present-day match visuals retain a crisp, cool palette to highlight the ongoing life of the club.

I decided to shoot the documentary at a meditative pace of 30 Frames per Second, employing crossfades and slow dissolves in post-production to reinforce the documentary's tone of remembrance and reverence. Audio plays a central role in immersing the viewer, interviews are subtly layered with a Celtic background score to provide the documentary a traditional Irish aesthetic.

Graphic elements were kept minimal. Lower thirds are clean and understated, providing just enough context to orient the viewer without distraction. Time and place for the opening clip was introduced through short, unobtrusive text overlay that blend into the visual flow of the match being shown.

I decided to open the documentary with the visuals of the Cricket World Cup match between Ireland and England in 2007 because that moment was arguably one of the highs for modern Irish Cricket as reflected by Ben White and John Mullin's responses. My dissertation adviser Professor Conor Tiernan had been kind enough to share a documentary editing guide with me and I had taken inspiration from that. Each of the interviewees' response to that historic moment was perfect to set the tone of the documentary.

3.3 Practical Construction

The entire documentary was filmed using an iPhone 16, making full use of the device's cinematic capabilities. All interviews were recorded in cinematic mode to achieve a shallow depth of field, helping isolate the subject and create a more professional, immersive visual tone. For all B-roll sequences, including match-day activity and environment shots, the standard video mode was used, providing sharp, stable footage with minimal setup time.

An Amazon Basics mobile tripod, purchased during Prime Day, served as the primary support for the camera. Despite its simplicity, it offered sufficient stability for both static and tracking shots. For audio, a YRF wireless lavalier microphone was clipped to the collars of each interviewee. This setup delivered clear voice recordings with minimal background interference, even in outdoor or crowded settings.

No external crew or assistance was involved in the production. Every aspect of the documentary, from planning and logistics to setting up the camera, adjusting lighting, framing shots, and monitoring sound was managed independently. This solo approach allowed for complete creative control, but also demanded meticulous attention to detail and timing, especially during interviews where equipment had to be monitored while remaining engaged with the subject.

The decision to operate as a one-person crew fed directly into the documentary's intimate tone. The simple yet effective setup helped subjects feel at ease, resulting in candid, thoughtful interviews. The minimal gear footprint also allowed for agility when capturing spontaneous moments and commuting to the shoot locations on my bike.

3.4 Post Production

Post-production for the documentary was completed on Adobe Premiere Pro using a personal laptop. A 30 frames-per-second (fps) sequence was selected for the timeline, as the majority of the footage, including interviews and B-rolls had been captured in this frame rate. This ensured consistency across all visual elements and helped maintain a smooth and professional final output.

The first step in the editing process was trimming down the interviews. This was a crucial task, as the documentary had to be shaped within the advised 15–16-minute duration, based on feedback from my dissertation supervisor. Each interview was reviewed thoroughly to identify and retain the most relevant and insightful responses. This allowed for an engaging layered narrative that progressed logically while keeping the viewer's attention. An initial assembly cut was then created by arranging these refined clips in a sequence that made narrative sense and aligned with the thematic arc of the film.

Once the structure was in place, colour correction was applied to all interview clips to ensure a consistent visual tone. The grading approach was intentionally subtle and sober, focusing on correcting skin tones, balancing exposure, and achieving a naturally polished look. This minimalistic style helped retain the authenticity of the footage while still

presenting it in a professional light. Scenes were colour corrected individually to match lighting conditions while preserving visual consistency throughout.

Audio post-production was carried out in Adobe Audition. All interviews were cleaned to reduce background noise, enhance clarity, and balance levels across clips. A Celtic-inspired musical score was chosen to complement the documentary's theme, helping to create an immersive tone rooted in Irish cultural identity. The music was sourced from YouTube's royalty-free audio library. However, the original track was not long enough for the entirety of the documentary so it was edited and remixed in Audition to suit the desired timing and rhythm. Manual ducking in Premiere Pro was applied to ensure that the background music lowered in volume during spoken dialogue, preserving the intelligibility of the interviewees while maintaining the film's atmosphere.

The title animation was done through a rigorous process. After reaching out to multiple animators to get the title animated, I realized that the cost for having a 10 second animation created from scratch was quite more than my budget allowed. I then decided to do it on my own. I combed through hours of match footage on the International Cricket Council's YouTube channel to find a 5 second cricketing clip, shot from the angle I had envisioned. I then froze the last frame of that clip and added the title of my documentary. That 10 second clip was then overlaid with commentary audio from a different video and a filter was applied to the footage to make give it a sketch-on-paper look.

To enhance transitions and pacing, cross-fades and dissolves were selectively used. These editing techniques helped smoothen cuts between scenes without drawing attention away from the content. Once the core narrative was finalised, B-roll and archival footage were integrated as the second-last step. These visuals were carefully selected to complement and support the spoken content particularly during moments when historians discussed specific events or figures, offering the audience a richer understanding of the subject matter.

The final stage of post-production involved creating and adding the end credits. To conclude the documentary on a more personal and reflective note, an unused clip from

the John Mullins interview was included alongside the credits. Although the content of this clip did not directly advance the documentary's main story, it featured Mullins speaking about his own background and connection to the subject. Including this moment served to humanise the character, offering the audience an emotional connection and a thoughtful closing to the film.

3.5 Ethical Aspects and Limitations

From an ethical standpoint, every effort was made to preserve the authenticity and integrity of the contributors' voices. All interviewees participated voluntarily and were fully informed of the purpose of the documentary. They were encouraged to speak freely and were not prompted to give any particular responses. Their contributions were not altered or taken out of context in post-production; instead, the editing process focused on preserving the natural flow and intent of their statements.

In terms of limitations, producing a documentary of approximately 15 minutes places certain constraints on both content and distribution. The time limit meant that some material, especially from longer interviews had to be left out despite its relevance. This affected the depth in which certain topics could be explored, particularly those requiring broader historical context.

Another key limitation faced during production was the lack of access to current or former members of the Irish national cricket team. Despite reaching out to several players through official and informal channels, there were no responses to interview requests. The insights of seasoned players as compared to Ben White who is relatively new to the international environment, would have added valuable context, particularly in drawing connections between grassroots cricket and the national level. This gap ultimately shaped the film's scope, grounding it more firmly in local history and club culture rather than extending it to the national stage.

From a platform perspective, while the documentary is well-suited for YouTube where viewers are more likely to engage with longer-form, reflective content, it is less adaptable to platforms like Instagram or TikTok, which favour shorter, attention-grabbing video

formats. Splitting the film into shorter clips or thematic segments may offer a way to reach wider audiences on these platforms without compromising the depth of the original work but would take away some of the essence that the film as a whole captures. Conversely, the documentary is too short for most traditional broadcast formats, which typically require a runtime of 24 minutes or longer. As such, the film is best positioned for digital release, where flexibility in length and format allows it to reach a niche but engaged viewership aligned with its goals.

Chapter Four: Discussion

4.1 Evolving the Central Idea

When this documentary was first conceptualised, the intent was to explore cricket in Ireland as a broad topic, examining the sport's changing reputation, its colonial associations, and the rise of new players and audiences across the country. However, this initial approach posed a risk of being too broad and lacking narrative cohesion. The turning point came after a discussion with my supervisor, Professor Conor Tiernan, who suggested grounding the documentary in a lived experience. He advised focusing on Phoenix Cricket Club, the oldest club in Ireland, as an anchor through which broader themes could be explored.

This advice proved pivotal. Upon researching Phoenix Cricket Club, I discovered a rich legacy intertwined with the very birth and transformation of cricket in Ireland. The club became a narrative tool that allowed the story to remain focused while opening avenues to explore wider questions: How has Irish cricket evolved socially and culturally? What role do historic institutions like Phoenix play in sustaining the game's relevance? With this shift, the documentary began to organically take shape, and its new title *The Long Game* was chosen to reflect the enduring resilience of the sport and those who played it in Ireland.

4.3 Contribution to Research

The interviews were instrumental in shaping *The Long Game*, and a number of key themes emerged. The first and most obvious theme was the colonial origin of cricket in Ireland. Historian Paul Rouse explained that cricket was embedded in Ireland during the height of British rule, particularly the 18th and 19th centuries, and that its first formal matches date back to 1792 in Phoenix Park. The sport's earliest advocates were members of the British administrative and social elite. This supports the widely held belief that cricket was long considered a "foreign" or "elitist" game.

However, Rouse also added nuance by noting that early cricket wasn't exclusively for the elite. Before the Land War and Gaelic Revival, cricket was played across classes and counties, including Kilkenny and Tipperary, indicating that the colonial association became more culturally politicised over time rather than being inherently present from the beginning. John Mullins echoed this complexity by noting how Phoenix Cricket Club was originally a closed circle but has now evolved into a welcoming, community-driven organisation.

Rouse's deep historical framing also provided a crucial academic grounding to the documentary, situating cricket within the broader contexts of nationalism, class struggle, and cultural memory. His comment that founder of the GAA, Michael Cusack, had once advocated for a cricket club in every parish is a powerful reminder that exposes the myth of a purely nationalist sporting past.

A second major theme in the interviews was the changing perception of cricket in Irish society. John Mullins and Ben White both observed a cultural shift over recent decades. Ben White reflected on how his friends, many of whom grew up unaware or uninterested in cricket, have become more open to the sport and now even enjoy watching games. He called Ireland's 2011 win over England a landmark moment that "put us on the map," even if the match's wider impact was limited by its being broadcast behind a paywall. This underscores how pivotal media access and visibility are in changing national sporting perceptions.

The Long Game hopes to contribute to the limited but growing academic and media attention surrounding cricket in Ireland. The sport has largely been left out of mainstream national narratives, often deemed "un-Irish" or marginal. By documenting not only its colonial past but also its current multicultural identity, the documentary would serve as a corrective lens, revealing a deeper more complex Irish sporting culture.

The third and perhaps the most fascinating theme that emerged is immigration's vital role in sustaining and reviving Irish cricket. Both Rouse and Mullins spoke in depth about the recent growth of migrant communities, especially from cricketing nations like Pakistan,

India, and the Caribbean and their contribution to Irish cricket's resurgence. Mullins proudly mentioned that Phoenix currently has 12 nationalities playing for the club and that many of the club's youth are second-generation immigrants who consider cricket their first sport. This evolving demographic reality challenges outdated stereotypes of cricket as an Anglo-Irish pastime.

This theme also enriches the academic discourse by shifting the focus away from cricket as a colonial relic and repositioning it as a living and evolving practice shaped by the contemporary multicultural environment. It challenges binary narratives that pit "Irish" sports against "foreign" ones, revealing instead how cultural integration redefines national identity through sport.

4.2 Production

The production of *The Long Game* was a highly independent process that presented both challenges and opportunities. As a one-person crew, I was solely responsible for every aspect of production. While this level of autonomy offered complete creative control, it also brought logistical and technical challenges, particularly when managing interviews and filming simultaneously.

There were moments when multitasking compromised execution, for example, while interviewing in naturally lit spaces, the exposure on screen occasionally shifted. While interviewing Ben White, I had to do a second take one minute into the interview because I had forgotten to lock the exposure while multitasking in a rush and the exposure was constantly shifting in the camera. Similarly, while setting up a camera frame, there were times when reflections or background distractions went unnoticed. These are aspects I would improve upon in future projects by possibly enlisting minimal assistance or using remote monitoring equipment.

Filming at Phoenix Cricket Club was a rewarding experience. The location added authenticity and visually communicated the themes of history and community. The interview with John Mullins and Ben White added insight and depth to the documentary's core narrative. A key challenge, however, was capturing quality sound within the club

premises since it was crowded with players and staff. Wind and environmental noise occasionally interfered with audio, especially when I was unable to monitor levels while adjusting framing or conducting the interview. All of this noise had to be cleaned out manually in post-production.

One fortunate outcome of pre-production planning was the preparation of tailored interview questions for prospective members of the Irish national cricket team. Although none of the cricketers I contacted responded to my outreach attempts, I carried those questions with me, on my phone, throughout the production process. This foresight proved invaluable when I unexpectedly met Ben White at Phoenix Cricket Club. Because I was already equipped with relevant and thoughtful questions, I was able to capitalise on the opportunity immediately. This encounter added a rich and current voice to the film, something that would not have been possible without prior preparation.

Equally valuable were the off-camera conversations I had with interviewees. Paul Rouse showed a genuine interest in the project and took the time to discuss my future plans. He encouraged me to start a blog and continue publishing material to build a body of work. We also spoke about the current cricketing landscape in Ireland, particularly how immigrant communities especially from countries like Pakistan have played a significant role in cricket's recent revival. Similarly, John Mullins expressed strong enthusiasm for the documentary, telling me he looked forward to seeing the final product and believed it could help Phoenix Cricket Club's marketing efforts. He also generously introduced me to several staff members at the club. Unfortunately, they were all tied up with match day responsibilities and unavailable for on-camera interviews. Nonetheless, the conversations added valuable context and affirmed the relevance of the documentary's themes.

4.3 Post Production

Having spent considerable time with the footage during filming, I initially believed I had a clear sense of what would make it into the final cut. However, once I began reviewing interviews in context, it became apparent that some moments I had originally deemed

essential didn't serve the pacing or thematic arc of the final film. Many powerful soundbites were ultimately left out in favour of a more balanced and digestible screenplay. The process of trimming and shaping the interviews was less about technical duration and more about emotional weight, making sure each moment earned its place in the documentary's limited run time.

One of the more rewarding aspects of editing was discovering connections between the visuals and the themes that weren't immediately obvious during production. For example, B-roll shots of the match being played or the quiet ambience of Phoenix Park took on a symbolic quality when placed alongside historical reflections. Colour grading played a key role in tying these visual elements together. I opted for a desaturated, earthy tone with subtle warmth meant to evoke nostalgia without tipping too much into sentimentality.

Audio post-production posed its own unique challenges. Despite my best efforts to manage sound during filming, certain interviews, especially the ones conducted during match day were difficult to clean completely. Wind and background chatter remained persistent problems in a few clips, and while tools like Adobe Audition helped improve clarity, some imperfections had to be embraced. These rough edges, however, added a certain realism to the documentary that felt in line with its grounded subject matter. It reminded me that this wasn't a polished promotional piece, but an honest exploration of a community and its history.

One key learning during this phase was the importance of allowing flexibility in post-production. While my initial edit followed the pre-planned structure closely, I found the documentary improved when I allowed space for intuitive decisions. Letting a moment breathe, cutting a scene earlier than scripted, or returning to a theme more than once if it helped reinforce the emotional arc. Having that level of creative control was both a challenge and a privilege, and it is a lesson I will carry forward into future projects.

Ultimately, post-production was where the documentary evolved from a research-driven film to a character-driven story. The tools and software enabled that transformation, but the process required trust in my instincts, openness to change, and a willingness to

reimagine what the film could be. It was the most time-consuming stage of the project, but also the most rewarding. It was where the documentary truly came to life.

4.4 Final Thoughts

Creating *The Long Game* has been an experience unlike any other. What began as a general exploration of cricket in Ireland evolved into a focused story about one club's enduring legacy and its role in shaping the sport's identity in the country. Along the way, I met individuals who not only contributed to the project but also influenced my own outlook as a storyteller.

Social media played a subtle but important role throughout production. I documented the behind-the-scenes journey on my Instagram profile, where I shared clips from Phoenix Cricket Club, brief production updates, and reflections. This helped build anticipation and even prompted some engagement from people who didn't follow cricket but were interested in the cultural angle. Though I didn't expect much response initially, I received supportive messages from fellow students, cricket enthusiasts, and members of immigrant communities in Ireland who saw their own stories reflected in mine.

Conversations off-camera also shaped the experience. Paul Rouse offered career advice that went beyond this film, urging me to keep writing and start publishing regularly, perhaps through a blog. His belief in the role of immigrant communities in reviving cricket in Ireland reinforced a key theme in the film. John Mullins was encouraging and saw the potential of this documentary in helping promote Phoenix Cricket Club. Even though I couldn't interview more people on match day, those informal exchanges enriched the overall journey.

Ultimately, *The Long Game* was not just about cricket. It became a story about identity, legacy, and how sport can bridge past and present. I leave this project with new skills, valuable connections, and a renewed sense of direction as a journalist and filmmaker.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The central question that *The Long Game* set out to explore was: "How has Cricket evolved from a symbol of British colonial power to its contemporary role in Irish society?" Over the course of this documentary project, I have come to understand that the answer is both layered and evolving. Cricket in Ireland is no longer confined to its colonial legacy. Instead, it has been reshaped by community, immigration, and a growing national identity within sport.

Through interviews with figures like historian Paul Rouse and former cricket club president John Mullins, the documentary charts cricket's transformation from a game once associated with the Anglo-Irish elite to one now being reimagined by new communities and local enthusiasts. Paul Rouse's insights were particularly valuable in positioning cricket within a broader historical context, emphasising how it was once a central part of Irish sporting life before being marginalised after the creation of the GAA. His reflections underscored how cricket's revival today is not a reassertion of colonial values, but rather an example of how sports can transcend origins and be repurposed to reflect contemporary realities.

Ben White's spontaneous inclusion in the documentary served as a symbolic and practical breakthrough. As a current Irish international player, his willingness to speak gave the film relevance and immediacy. His presence helped bridge the historical with the modern and underlined the changing face of Irish cricket where young talent and multicultural representation are increasingly prominent.

One of the major findings from this project is that immigrant communities, particularly from cricket-loving countries like Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, are playing a crucial role in the sport's revival at grassroots level. While this was a known trend from my initial research, it was reinforced through my off-camera conversations and first-hand experience filming at Phoenix Cricket Club. The ground itself was a perfect metaphor for the documentary's central theme: a place that once stood for tradition now buzzing with new energy and multicultural voices.

From a production perspective, the project reaffirmed the importance of flexibility, preparedness, and persistence. Despite multiple outreach efforts, I was unable to secure interviews with past or present members of the Irish national team ahead of time. However, this taught me the value of always being prepared. Having pre-written questions enabled me to take advantage of an unexpected opportunity with Ben White, proving that preparation can turn chance into success.

Reflecting on the final product, *The Long Game* sits within a growing body of independent documentary storytelling that aims to revisit historical narratives through a contemporary lens. While professional documentaries on Irish sport often focus on GAA or rugby, this project adds a unique voice by focusing on a minority sport with a layered past. It also stands apart by spotlighting the role of immigrants in shaping Irish sport today; something rarely given attention in mainstream sports media.

Looking forward, the documentary has potential for development. With further funding and access, a longer-form version could include voices from the South Asian Irish community, women's cricket, and officials from Cricket Ireland. The story of cricket's evolution is far from complete; this film is a starting point, not a conclusion.

Ultimately, this project has taught me that sports are never just about the game, they are about people, culture, memory, and identity. The Long Game is my small contribution to a much bigger conversation about how Ireland continues to evolve and how even its most unlikely sports can tell powerful stories of change.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Questionnaires

Note: The following are the originally prepared questionnaires for each interviewee. During the interviews, additional on-the-spot follow-up questions were also asked in response to the answers given. Those questions are not included here.

Paul Rouse

1. Could you walk us through the early history of cricket in Ireland? When and how did the sport take root here and what was the British Empire's role in the sport's introduction?
2. How was cricket perceived socially and politically in 19th- and early 20th-century Ireland? Was it seen as a “foreign” or colonial game?
3. Did the partition of Ireland or the War of Independence have any significant impact on cricket’s popularity or infrastructure?
4. Do you think cricket was ever deliberately sidelined in favour of more ‘Irish’ sports like hurling and Gaelic football?
5. Is there a class or cultural dimension to how cricket has been received in Ireland – urban vs rural, Anglo-Irish vs nationalist traditions?
6. In recent decades, what factors have contributed to the resurgence or increased interest in cricket in Ireland?
7. How significant was Ireland’s win against England in the 2011 Cricket World Cup in changing perceptions about the sport?
8. Do you think Irish media has given cricket enough attention compared to other minority sports?
9. What role have immigrant communities, especially South Asian and Caribbean populations, played in cricket’s revival or growth here?
10. Do you think cricket could play a more central role in Irish sport in the future? What would it take to get there?

11. Finally, why is it important, culturally or historically, to keep telling stories about cricket in Ireland?

John Mullins

1. Can you tell me about the origins of Phoenix Cricket Club and its role in Irish cricket history?
2. Phoenix is considered the oldest cricket club in Ireland — what makes its legacy so enduring?
3. How has the club evolved over the decades in terms of facilities, structure, and community engagement?
4. What are some of the most significant matches, events, or milestones in the club's history?
5. How did political or social events in Ireland (e.g., independence, the Troubles, immigration) impact cricket or the club over the years?
6. In a GAA-dominated country, where has cricket historically stood in terms of public perception?
7. Do you think cricket in Ireland has been unfairly labelled as a "foreign" or "elitist" sport?
8. How did Phoenix navigate its identity during periods when cricket was seen as "un-Irish"?
9. Have you seen a cultural shift in how Irish people view cricket today?
10. What role has immigration played in keeping cricket alive and thriving in Ireland?
11. How has the rise of the Irish national team impacted interest and participation in the sport?
12. What are your hopes for the future of Phoenix and Irish cricket more broadly?
13. What does cricket mean to you personally, and what has your journey with Phoenix taught you?

Ben White

1. Can you tell me how you first got into cricket? Was it through family, school, or a local club?
2. What were some of the challenges you faced growing up playing cricket in Ireland?
3. Was there ever a time when you felt cricket wasn't a 'mainstream' option in Ireland? How did that shape your journey?
4. What does it mean to you to wear the Irish jersey, especially in a sport with such a complex history here?
5. How has the setup of Irish cricket changed since you first joined the team?
6. Do you feel the team has earned more respect globally since Ireland was awarded Test status in 2017?
7. Cricket in Ireland has long been seen as a 'foreign' or 'elitist' sport — do you think that perception still exists?
8. Do you see cricket becoming more integrated into mainstream Irish sporting culture?
9. How do you respond to people who say "cricket isn't an Irish sport"?
10. How do you feel cricket is covered by Irish media compared to sports like GAA or rugby?
11. What would you say to a young Irish boy or girl who wants to take up cricket seriously?

Appendix B – Transcript of *The Long Game*

Well it was huge because a lot of Irish people were particularly pleased about that and there was a memorable century in that game by O'Brien who's well known and plays here often and is from a great Dublin cricketing family. So we had what we would say one of our own competing and winning against our great friends the English.

Yeah it set the platform anyway I think. I think Kev O'Brien did a massive job for us in that game and yeah he put us on the map I think. We've actually gone on to beat a few of the full member nations since we've become a full member nation but yeah we always seem to cause an upset which is which is quite cool to know that we can beat anyone on our day.

So Ireland's win against England was important to a point in changing perceptions across about the sport. The problem with it was the game was behind a paywall in Ireland it was on Sky Sports and it wasn't seen by very many people who would ordinarily have seen that if that had been on a game that was shown on RTE it would have had a much bigger impact I believe.

The relationship between Ireland and Britain as part of what became the United Kingdom and then was the British Empire was fundamental to the spread of cricket into Ireland. The first records we have of cricket being played here are in the middle of the 18th century when there were a few ad hoc matches and the first really famous formal game was in 1792 in the Phoenix Park in a pitch that was laid out. So they're the early origins in the 18th century. The modern sports revolution is really a product of the 19th century and of course that's the period when the British Empire was at its peak and Ireland was then tied in to the United Kingdom and you can see it. What was this modern sporting revolution? It was based around the formation of clubs to play a game and the first cricket clubs in Ireland begin to form in the 1820s and the 1830s and into the 1840s and by the 1870s cricket was being played in every county in Ireland where there were clubs established.

Yeah well Phoenix Cricket Club was founded back in the 1840s by people who were represented the British establishment here in Ireland. They were the top men of that era.

The club is playing cricket continuously since that time and therefore probably could be considered to be one of the oldest continuously playing cricket club in Ireland. It's also one of the oldest clubs of any kind in Ireland. The people who founded it were obviously interested in and they were generally working here on in their roles as when Ireland was part of the British Empire.

The Phoenix Park Cricket Club was full of people of wealth and privilege and immense status in the society and it was they loved playing the game but also was a place for them to mingle recreationally and that was really important too.

Well Ireland was very much part of the British Empire at that time and the people who ran the British Empire cricket was their game and they wanted to play it while they were here so they set themselves up exclusively for themselves. As things progressed they would have interacted with a lot of Irish and Irish would have started playing cricket and some of them would have proved to be very adept at cricket. The Irish like all sports and even though this in Ireland might well have been considered a foreign game like soccer wars people still leaped into it and excelled at it many times.

Yeah well I'd have to agree with them because I don't think it was yeah it wasn't born in Ireland anyway it was either there was probably still out there either India or England which whichever one wants to take the credit for it.

The club has developed and played continuously since that time. At that time it was an all-male club but now today it is very much a mixed club. It originally was for the elite the administrators of Ireland on behalf of the British Crown or the British Empire. Now it's populated entirely and run by the community. We draw on the community the Irish community for our source of players and members who have run the club.

There is no denying the fact that the people who play cricket in Ireland cricket is very strong in the North of Ireland in Unionist and Protestant communities. It's founded on schools playing the game as well and those schools are really elite schools in very many places they're also tied in to certain traditions in certain areas also involved in Protestants but that isn't the full story and if you look at places like North County Dublin where there

is a long tradition of playing the game it's cross class cross community and it's embedded in local traditions.

Well that would have been a natural thing in a time when the nationalists didn't always feel kindly their overseers or the British who ruled us mostly against our will for the most part. So I don't think there's anything unusual about it being considered a foreign game but now those distinctions increasingly have disappeared as time has progressed.

Yeah no I think it's actually been quite accepted over the last while like you know speaking to my friends who wouldn't really know too much about cricket they all love to come and watch it and stuff like that so yeah it's pretty cool that it's growing in the country and hopefully it'll get bigger from there.

Before the 1870s cricket was fine there was no problem in how it was perceived socially and we know from studies of Westmeath and of Kilkenny and of Tipperary that people of all classes played cricket. What changed though the land war changed everything and the divides that were constructed between people of wealth and privilege there were 7,000 landlord families in Ireland and they were fundamental to the organisation of cricket in some areas not in all ways because there were also cricket clubs involved in homes and bands and in factories and in local areas and streets but what changed it then was the land war and then the gathering sense of the Gaelic revival which presented cricket in a straight way and then the route drew in divides of class and of nationality.

Well there were significant implications for the club as it was in the 1800s the first major event would have been the foundation of the GAA back in the 1800s and the GAA up to the foundation of the GAA cricket was the most of the biggest organised sport in Ireland but then after that the nationalists had somewhere to go in the time before that nationalists generally worked for the biggest states and played when the boss says you should play but that was the first big change. Changing life and change the changing world affected us the same as it did everybody else things modernise whether you like it or not and also the 1916 rebellion here in Ireland focused mainly in Dublin had a major impact on the relationship between the aristocracy the British rulers and Ireland. But when it was un-

Irish it was a closed shop here the guys who ran it ran it for themselves and only invited in players who were of their ilk. For instance when the Leinster cricket union was founded in 1919 just after the revolution Phoenix didn't join initially there were six or eight good teams some of them still about not all of them but Phoenix decided not to join because they were content to stay as they were and play friendlies with the major people their friends in England their friends in Australia their friends in in India Africa places like that.

What has happened a couple of things have happened that have really helped us better cricket first of all cricket is much better organised there's an Irish cricket union which was in there for 100 years and before that so the Irish cricket union began to develop the game and organise proper competition it took them a very long time to do that but when they did it that's the first point.

Yes there's a big cultural shift the Irish like all sports and with the coming of television and the fact that Irish people can see cricket on television and see Irish men and women competing with countries like your own here in Ireland has made a major impression. A lot of the sports people would say sure I could do that silly old game it's easy to hit a ball those guys are not good we have had many people come here and try that and found out to their cost that it's not that easy to hit a cricket ball travelling at 70 or 80 miles an hour towards you.

The second point is the very welcome influx of migrant communities into Ireland has brought people of huge expertise in playing the game and huge love of that game into the country.

Immigration has played a big role in cricket in Ireland because we've been able to avail of visiting people who are interested in playing cricket they learn about Phoenix and they come here and say I think I'd like to involve. Last year we had 12 nationalities playing cricket for Ireland.

And particularly in the last 20 years that has helped foment kind of a spread of the game into areas where it was never played but also more people who actually are playing the game and more second generation people. People who are having kids here now giving

them a place to play cricket because that's the sport they love and that's fundamental to it as well and then going between so there you got more people involved it's spreading through the schools by the introduction of really good programmes beginners programmes and then you put a fourth thing into it the elevation of Ireland's status as a one day country and then as a test playing nation.

From the time we beat I think it was Bangladesh in way back in 2007 this was Ireland winning against the head as it were you know we're not a cricket nation but we beat some cricket nations so we're playing in the world cup our women had gone earlier to play in the world cup in Australia in the 80s in the 1980s but that almost passed unnoticed here in Ireland so you can see that there's a big difference now and right now we are still not a big international game but when England come to play here in Malahide we sell out.

There is no way that cricket has got enough attention in Irish newspapers given the number of players and the rise in the Irish team the reality of it is though that everything now in newspapers is a battle for resources and a battle for places online and it's really really difficult thing to give everything its due desert so but I do think there is there is space for more coverage of cricket.

Well there's no such thing as too much but I don't think enough is has been achieved either television coverage is really the thing here cricket is a minority game and gets minority coverage but we do have the foreign channels which are being made to Ireland and the cricket nutters can get enough on television through that.

I think it's actually grown a lot yeah like it's on on all the news and the newspapers and stuff whenever we play so yeah obviously because the GAA has a lot more funding than we do it would be it only makes sense but hopefully in the future it can continue to grow but it's yeah I wouldn't say it's a that like not very well covered I think it is quite well covered and the fact that it's on TMT sports and stuff is quite good as well.

Well in public perceptions GAA is the big deal here in Ireland there's no parish in Ireland which doesn't have a heavy involvement with the GAA but we have GAA players here one young lady who played here but picked first for Leinster under 15 and disappeared

from here and we asked her recently and she came back to visit where she had been said I play for Dublin and Gaelic ladies Gaelic football now in Coke Park you can get 82,000 into Coke Park you can't get them here to watch Phoenix.

Yeah I think cricket is on the right path it is developing a much better infrastructure it is getting more people playing and it's working through the schools there is no quick fix here that's the only way to do it and it needs better facilities that includes it needs to develop Malahide it needs to develop the Clontarf pitch they're great venues but they need then to have others around the place in the north for infrastructure but it comes down to underage games can you get the youth playing and if you do that will drive everything.

Well I think we will continue to develop the objective of this club is to improve cricket in Ireland and to contribute to that. We do that by coaching our young people and have great satisfaction in seeing them take their place in international teams at the various levels and these walls are festooned particularly the room there with young people young boys and girls who've achieved international selection playing cricket for Ireland. This is new.

It's really important to tell stories about cricket in Ireland because it is part of Irish history it's been part of Irish history for more than 250 years and it talks it's really important that cricket across the span of the development of cricket that that story is told because it helps people understand the real complexity of history in Ireland there are people in this country who like you who would like you to believe that everything was just nationalist and Gaelic and everything and the reality is much more complicated than that and the great example of this is that the founder of the Gaelic Athletic Association Michael Cusack was a cricket player he was a man who called in 1882 two years before he found GAA he said there should be a cricket club established in every parish in Ireland now he changed into something else but you can't deny what he was previously and his interest in cricket was something that sustained him and was based on schools so nobody is any less of an Irish person because they play cricket as against hurling or Gaelic football or rugby or soccer it's part of history and therefore as part of history should not be hidden it should be revealed.

Well it's a very good thing to talk about because many of the Irish don't know an awful lot about cricket it is a very good story some of the people who played cricket here like Charles Stewart Parnell are legends in Irish like Robert Gregory the poet who Yeats wrote about on the wall there played cricket here and when people find out about that they say well there's something interesting up there after all in that silly cricket club.

Appendix C – Credits for Stock Footage

Archival footage and images were retrieved from the websites, public social media accounts and YouTube or Dailymotion channels of the following organisations and individuals:

Cricket Ireland

Cricket Leinster

Phoenix Cricket Club

Experience Gaelic Games

International Cricket Council

Waterford Treasures

Al Jazeera English

The Gaelic Athletic Association

The Irish Times

European Migration Network

Carlow County IGP

The Guardian

BBC Sport

YouTube: Cricket Stuff

YouTube: Tanvir Hasan

YouTube: British Pathé

YouTube: Samar Khan

YouTube: The Cricket Arena

Dailymotion: Social Media